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Dear all

22nd May 2021

Thank you for your discussion with me on our church service times. This is a way of finding if I can continue to minister at St John's Swalecliffe while also ministering at All Saints without adopting a simultaneous service pattern which would dilute my ministry at St John's down to one Sunday a month and leave it open to a different clergyperson or lay person leading the service each week of the month - something that would not allow it to build up continuity.

We know from widespread research that a spectrum of visiting ministers in a church across a typical month does not lead to growth., We also know there is no funding to replace Rev David Vannerly at Swalecliffe and hence why I have come forward to assist here.

Last night St John's agreed to the proposals we had made at All Saints annual meeting on Wednesday night - namely that the

- 1) 8am will continue at All Saints as usual
- 2) Followed by a 9.30am service at Swalecliffe
- 3) Followed by a 10.30am service at All Saints.

In order to prepare for this change the earliest we could bring in these new times is **Sunday 27th June**. The main reason is that I will have to change the service booklets at All Saints to make it easier for my arrival in the service at about 10.50am which is what we agreed at the ADCM on Wednesday.

The first part of the service will be led by a mix of laity and retired clergy when they are on the rota.

We will need to have one or two more lay folk come forward to lead the first part of the service and I am interested in hearing from candidates for this role. Those who are servers or celebrant's assistants are particularly encouraged to approach me. They will be particularly needed when Denise, Jayne and retired clergy are unavailable, though I would encourage more lay involvement in this part of the service anyway so more laity involved here even when these folk are available would still be nice.

The changes we are going to have to make to our 10.30am service are as follows

- 1) Move the confession and absolution to just before the Peace

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2) Move the sermon to just before the confession and absolution

The service structure would therefore look like this.

The sermon and confession have to be moved later as I could not possibly be rushed getting back to the church and miss my preaching slot putting the service into confusion or arrive and immediately launch into a sermon 2 minutes having entered the worship arena on the weeks I am preaching. Also a priest should be present for the confession and absolution in my view even if the rest of the service is lay led and we cannot always be sure retired clergy will be present.

I think we should have the same structure each week regardless of whether I am preaching or not.

Welcome by Churchwarden

Opening Hymn

Welcome by Leader (lay or ordained)

OPening Liturgy and acclamations

Collect for purity - which provides at least some penitential tone before the Gloria

Gloria

Collect

First reading

Gradual hymn

Gospel reading

Creed

Intercessions

Sermon - because the intercessions will not follow immediately afterwards I would encourage preachers to conclude their sermons with a few brief prayers if they so wish

Confession and Absolution

The Peace

Offertory hymn

Eucharistic prayer

Communion with music group and choir

Interaction with Sunday Club (Adventurers) - see note below

Churchwardens notices and banns

Closing hymn

Blessing

Coffee and tea at which I would be able to be present each week apart from one week a month when - like St Peter's - I would remain fully at St John's for the morning

There will also be one Sunday a month when I would be fully present at All Saints. On these weeks, when I am present, or when Christopher, Keith or David are leading the service, the first part of the service could still have a lay leadership as it currently does apart from the priest doing the opening acclamation, welcome, and leading the collect.

Sunday Club - Adventurers

Elena expressed happiness with the idea of Sunday Club (Adventurers) beginning at 10am when this new change comes into place. As this is a longer club there is the possibility of them coming into church at 11.35am to receive Holy Communion and then tell us how they have got on with their craft work. This would give them longer together as a group before coming into church which means they would be further advanced in their craft work. We

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would not have them with us at the very beginning of the service but the problem with that has been they in the past only had about 45 minutes for their group which was not very long and they enjoy this so much they actually prefer a longer time. I would appreciate their feedback though on this.

Family Service

I am thinking of moving to seasonal family services rather than monthly family services as the monthly family service had lost momentum and we sometimes had more of our regular families at a normal Sunday club than on a Second Sunday. The Family Service could be at Mothers Day, Harvest, and Remembrance Sunday, plus we could also look to having one of them in the Vicarage garden in the summer.

Vicarage garden services

There is the possibility of moving some of the 10.30am eucharists into the Vicarage garden if that is the collective will of the congregation following the success of last year's summer services. This would actually have to be dependent on the weather forecast and a decision amongst us as to how often we did it, but I think it could work and would appreciate your feedback. I have had a lot of people asking we repeat them - though on this instance I am thinking of no more than 2 or 3 over the course of the summer but would appreciate your views.

Booklets

We will need to prepare new booklets for these changes but the essential liturgy has already been prepared and people like the seasonal variations. We will need help collating these but the printing does not need to be done all at once as the booklets only need to be prepared as each season arrives. The current booklets are getting tatty anyway. This is one of the reasons why we cannot move to this change till 27th June.

I hope this change will introduce a welcome new change to the service, allow you to return to the most popular 10.30am time that many of you have missed since we moved from it in 2015, whilst allowing me to try and help Swalecliffe church to grow. I realise it will be a busy morning for me but it is not more energy than many doctors, nurses, barristas, waiters, teachers, and so on expend in an average morning.

I sometimes think we overegg the demands on clergy when it comes to Sunday services. Many other jobs are equally if not more demanding in terms of energy levels. The demands on a priest are that they live in their job and are always "available" and the pressures of funerals, weddings and baptisms are much weightier than Sunday worship though I am grateful as ever from the help of my clergy colleagues within the Team and at All Saints.

Also to confirm the Thursday 10am, Sunday 8am, and Sunday 2.30pm services are not affected by these changes and the Sunday 2.30pm will continue till social distancing at the 10.30am is no longer necessary.

The reason why there are only 40 to 50 people at the 9.30am service at the moment is due to the requirement for social distancing and once this is removed the 2.30pm can be brought to an end. This though is some months off and I predict the 2.30pm continuing after June 21st as full confidence in meeting in large groups at close quarters is certainly

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not something I am hearing from government at the moment. My hunch is the 2.30pm will continue and social distancing will continue at the 9.30 10.30 service till the autumn. I may be proved wrong of course!

Here is the email and thank you for your patience in this time-consuming but important process.

Yours sincerely
Rev Simon Tillotson

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